

DEAD MAN'S MESSAGE

By H. M. Egbert.

The arctic had yielded up its long sought secret as to the location of the magnetic pole. The "Catherine" had returned, but of the twenty-nine who had sailed in her the year before only fifteen returned. And Lieutenant Andrews led them, for Captain Scoville had died in a snow crevice.

Andrews and Scoville had been alone at the time of the disaster, ex-



A Transformed John Came Smiling Into the Room.

cept for an Eskimo, who had been brought back to New York. These three had been separated from the rest of the party by forty miles of ice and snow. Lieutenant Andrews and his boy returned to the ship, and the lieutenant reported the catastrophe. Help had been impossible. Scoville had slipped over the edge and fallen under an avalanche of snow, a hundred feet beneath.

So Andrews said. Never yet has an arctic expedition returned but unkind things have been spoken of the sur-

vivors. It became known that Catherine Maynard had been sought in marriage by the captain and the lieutenant also. Whispers flew, suspicions grew. Instead of the reception such as a hero should receive, Lieutenant Andrews was robbed of his triumph and shunned by all. They said that he had killed Scoville.

Andrews knew what was said, but he had his duty to perform. He carried the news to Catherine. She stood listening quietly in her reception room in the big house of her father, the rear admiral, on Madison avenue. And all at once Andrews knew what he had never known before, that it was he she had loved, not Scoville.

"He slipped on the very edge of the precipice," Andrews explained. "In an instant he was gone, down the sheer rocky sides of the mountain. He was killed instantly, and buried under fifty feet of snow. Rescue, help, was impossible."

"I know," said Catherine Maynard, holding out her hands to him. "You could have done nothing. I know the agony of soul that a man must feel who comes home and leaves his captain dead. But there was nothing else to do and no blame can attach to you."

Andrews knew then that she had heard the rumors.

"I cannot ask you what I would wish to ask until I have cleared myself," he said sadly, and went away.

He was a dishonored man. On all sides enemies rose up against him; people whom he had offended, those who were offended with him, rumor-mongers, backbiters—all hounded him.

"Let somebody who can speak Eskimo question the boy," said his enemies. "Then we shall know the truth."

Andrews made answer, his only answer.

"Put the boy to school," he said, "till he can speak English, and let him be asked the truth."

"Impossible," the professors an-